

Words cannot express the sense of sadness we have for his family, and for the gratitude our country feels for his service. Sergeant Kassin died serving not just the United States, but the entire cause of liberty, on a noble mission to help spread the cause of freedom in Iraq and liberate an oppressed people from tyrannical rule. He was a true American.

We will forever hold him closely in our hearts, and remember his sacrifice and that of his family as a remembrance of his bravery and willingness to serve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the House's remembrance on this mournful day.

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROMOTION ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4157) to amend the Social Security Act to encourage the dissemination, security, confidentiality, and usefulness of health information technology:

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I rise today disappointed that I must oppose the Republican Health Care Information Technology Promotion Act. Developing and implementing a health information technology system that reflects the needs of patients and providers should be a priority for Congress and should be an issue that can be handled in a bipartisan manner. Unfortunately, once again the Republican Majority has rejected common-sense and strong public policy and instead chosen to support a sham piece of legislation that even the Congressional Budget Office states will "not significantly affect either the rate at which the use of health technology will grow or how well that technology will be designed and implemented".

Information Technology (IT) reform would help decrease medical mistakes and would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our health care system. However, we must work hard to strike the delicate balance between increasing use of electronic medical records and maintaining individuals' privacy. It is critical that we ensure patients' personal health information is secure and confidential when they go to the doctor or check into a hospital.

The Health Information Technology Promotion Act would codify the Office of the Health Information Technology Coordinator within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)—basically maintaining the status quo. This legislation fails to contain adequate funding for providers to implement EMR, it fails to provide for interoperability of system, it fails to address patient privacy protections, and could unfortunately open new opportunities for fraud and abuse by providing waivers for anti-kickback laws.

Congress must find a way to move forward with the implementation of health technology and protect the American public. For this reason, I supported the Dingell-Rangel substitute. This amendment included grants for providers, opportunities to leverage private dollars, strong patient protections and it maintains our anti-fraud laws. In addition, this proposal is

nearly identical to the legislation that has already passed the Senate unanimously. Unfortunately, the Republican Majority is so unwilling to have a full and open discussion about our health care system on the House floor, that this amendment was not even allowed to be considered during today's debate.

I oppose H.R. 4157 and urge my colleagues to do the same. Lets reject this do-nothing legislation and have a real debate about the health care challenges facing American families.

ZULEYKA RIVERA MENDOZA WINS THE FIFTH MISS UNIVERSE TITLE FOR PUERTO RICO

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 28, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to share with my colleagues the achievements of Zuleyka Rivera Mendoza, a young lady whose determination and perseverance have achieved the honor of being Miss Puerto Rico in the Miss Universe pageant and then the big prize, the Miss Universe 2006 title.

Born October 3, 1987, in Cayey, Puerto Rico at 3:47 p.m., this talented young lady of only 18 years of life, brought an incredible joy to the people of Puerto Rico the night of July 23, 2006, after winning the Miss Universe 2006 Pageant, held in Los Angeles, CA.

As a child growing up in Salinas, Zuleyka showed great interest in sports. At five she played football and by seven she was a member of a basketball team. But, her sporting days were over as soon as she won the title of "Queen of Hearts" in middle school. Her mother quickly recognized the talent given to her child and enrolled her in an academy for aspiring models. At fourteen, she was the first runner-up in the Miss Puerto Rico Teen Pageant, the same year she became the image of a local fashion magazine.

Zuleyka graduated from high school in Guayama, Puerto Rico, where she was president of the 2004 graduating class and part of the honor roll. Up until the pageant, she lived with her parents, Carmen M. Mendoza and Jerry Rivera, and her younger siblings, Jerry Jesús (12) and José Alberto (10), in Parcelas Vázquez, a small community in Salinas, Puerto Rico. Prior to winning the Miss Universe 2006 Pageant she was a freshman at the University of Puerto Rico, majoring in communications.

600 million people in 180 countries around the world witnessed the moment in which Miss Puerto Rico, Zuleyka Rivera Mendoza, was crowned with 120 pearls and 800 diamonds as Miss Universe 2006. She will now live in New York and travel the world in an effort to eradicate AIDS, these being part of her duties as Miss Universe 2006. After the pageant, Zuleyka wishes to fulfill her dream of becoming an actress, while always making the Puerto Rican community proud of her achievements.

TRIBUTE TO EUGENE THOMAS KENNEDY

HON. MARK R. KENNEDY

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 28, 2006

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, as my father approaches his 80th birthday, I would like to share with my colleagues how he has brightened the lives of so many with his conversational Irish wit, passion for life and genuine interest in other people.

Eugene Thomas Kennedy descended from immigrants who came from Ireland at the time of the potato famine. They settled for a period in Kentucky and Illinois before pioneering Minnesota in 1863. The Kennedy's originally settled in what today is called Savage, Minnesota, then called Hamilton Falls, later settling in Decorah Township near St. Clair, south of Mankato, before moving to Murdock at the turn of the century.

Eugene was born August 22, 1926 to Charles, a businessman and longtime mayor of Murdock, Minnesota and Rose, the daughter of a Swift County Commissioner Joe Cannon. Joe Cannon's name is inscribed on the 1890's Swift County Courthouse in Benson, Minnesota that issued the birth certificates for both my father and me. Eugene grew up and initially raised his own family in the home that his parents built right across the street from the Sacred Heart Church in Murdock, where I was baptized. His family sat every Sunday near his grandfather Francis Kennedy's stained glass window just across from the front pew at Sacred Heart. Eugene graduated from Murdock High School in 1944, took some courses at the University of Minnesota and a junior accounting course at Mankato Commercial College.

His father and grandfather taught Eugene to face adversities head on. His grandfather became blind when he was my age, but kept informed by having his son, Charles, read him the paper every day and later, even though blind and in his 70's, moved his family to Murdock, Minnesota for more land for his children. His father Charles took over the livery stable in Murdock. During the pneumonia epidemic of 1918 that killed more people than any war, as liveryman he courageously transported and assisted Murdock's doctor to aid the ill. When the automobile put his livery out of business, Charles did not seek a government handout, he started trucking livestock instead. Later in his life, Eugene tackled adversity head on himself.

As the youngest of four sons, Eugene was a self-proclaimed momma's boy. He learned to cook a few dishes growing up in the kitchen with Rose. The country wisdom he gained participating in many kitchen table conversations with the neighbors shaped his life. Rose was a woman of action. She went to see her Maker in action—weeding her garden, something she loved to do, but not before instilling in her descendants a belief that it is noble to tend not just your own garden, but also your corner of the world, so the community's flowers might also blossom. Eugene took up his hoe to cultivate a more bountiful harvest in the community he adopted to raise his family—Pequot Lakes.

On September 21st of last year, commemorating my mother's 75th birthday, I spoke of